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Sam Ervin's Column

Supervision Of CIA Is Backed Anew

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U.S. Senator From N.C.

WASHINGTON — Two weeks of Senate debate on the nuclear test ban treaty have served a useful national purpose. I was glad to find that virtually all of the members of the Senate entertained my view that we must be extremely diligent in the future to maintain our national defense in the highest state of readiness, notwithstanding the treaty. The debate made it plain that the Senate is unwilling to depend upon pious hopes in the quest for peace. The public was presented with the arguments which found the Senate divided into three opinions on the merits of the treaty rather than those who favored and those who opposed ratification.

Some Senators favored the treaty without any misgivings. Others opposed the treaty on defense grounds. Then, there were many, who like myself, voted to ratify the treaty, but who had individual misgivings about the wisdom of negotiating the agreement. Out of the debate came the consensus that while we must pursue the path of peace, we must also "keep our powder dry."

Indicative of this sentiment was the virtually unanimous vote appropriating \$47 billion for our national defense in Senate action which closely followed the ratification of the test ban treaty. Together with only appropriation measures for military construction and defense needs, the military budget approved by Congress this year is likely to be in the neighborhood of \$53 billion.

Moreover, the frustrating events in Viet Nam bring into focus an old debate which has been going on intermittently about the accuracy of our military intelligence information. Some years ago, Senator Mansfield proposed that Congress should set up a joint Congressional Committee composed of House and Senate members who would be charged with overseeing the activities of the CIA which operates in Executive secrecy. I supported that suggestion which was not adopted. Recent reports of conflicting policies being pursued by the CIA and the State Department in Viet Nam emphasize anew that Congressional committee supervision of the CIA is still a meritorious reform measure.

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